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J. Curwen

AGED 57.

SAMUEL CURWEN --- NUMISMATIST

(RF-49B)

Portrait from "Journal & Letters of the Late Samuel Curwen ..."

Sequential page 718

SAMUEL CURWEN -- NUMISMATIST

(RF-49B)

● from Raymond H. Williamson; Lynchburg, Virginia

Before me is a treasured copy of the "Journal and Letters of the Late Samuel Curwen, ... An American Refugee in England from 1775 to 1784 ..." edited by George Atkinson Ward (New York 1842). Curwen's remark on page 404 about a *Novo Constellatio* "5" is currently in focus. (CNL No. 57, page 702 & 703).

John Ford's research statements in Coin World for January 2, 1980 all seem sound -- six pages of it! When I purchased my copy of Ward's book years ago I had hoped to find additional references to the 5-Unit pattern, by careful search; nil found. However, from page 113 to page 280 we do find that Curwen was a bona fide coin collector, a facet which I haven't seen emphasized. These references are as follow, organized chronologically:

April 25, 1777

April 25. With Mr. Savage attended Longford's sales under Covent Garden piazza--viewed and examined his medals and coins; Roman, Grecian, Egyptian, Saxon, and English. Saw a brass farthing of the time of the Commonwealth that sold for three pounds four.

October 14, 1780 -- some three years later in a letter to (apparently) the same Mr. Savage:

TO ARTHUR SAVAGE, ESQ., NO. 7, BROMPTON-ROW.

No. 22, Castle-street, Falcon-square, Oct. 14, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

Your agreeable and obliging favor of the 11th instant came to hand the day after its date, but a severe cold, yet confining me, prevented the attention your politeness demanded.

I thank you for the kind information it contained respecting the Roman denarii and English coins; a few of which, if not above the reach of my purse, I would gladly procure.

If my indisposition goes off and the weather permits, I will wait on you next Monday afternoon. With compliments to Mrs. and Miss Savage,

I remain, etc., etc.

S. CURWEN.

The next entry -- dated October 15 identifies the day of the week as a Sunday. The "next Monday afternoon" mentioned by Curwen in his letter to Arthur Savage would be on October 16, 1780 and as we see Curwen kept his appointment.

October 16, 1780

Oct. 16. Visited Mr. A. Savage, and abode there till late in the evening.

The next two days show Curwen occupied with his numismatic interests:

October 17, 1780

Oct. 17. To Oxford-street, to examine some silver Roman denarii and Greek and English coins—for which they require far more than I think them worth—a Cromwell half-crown at thirty-six shillings! But I am not medal mad.

October 18, 1780

Oct. 18. Received an order from the treasury for my quarterly allowance. Bought ten silver Roman denarii. Mr. Samuel Hirst Sparhawk and Andrew Dalglish drank tea with me.

Then, some four years later -- March 2 and 4, 1784 appears a letter from Williom Pynchon of Salem (Mass.) in which Pynchon mentions that "Mr. Bartlett" and others are sailing aboard the Pilgrim.

In a reply from Landan dated May 9, 1784, Curwen advises Pynchon "Your favor of the 2nd and 4th March was delivered into my hands by Mr. Bartlet, the sight of whom was as unexpected as agreeable."

A week later Curwen and Bartlet together purchased plays for Pynchan and in Curwen's entry of that date he notes receipt of the Nova "5" from Bartlet:

May 15, 1784

May 15. With Mr. Bartlet purchased plays for Mr. Pynchon, and law-hooks for Mr. Ward. Mr. Bartlet presented me with a medal struck in Philadelphia;—in a round compartment stands, "U. S. 5 1783;"—round, "*Libertas et Justitia*;" on the other side, in the centre, an eye surrounded by a glory; the whole encompassed by *thirteen stars*,—with the legend, "*Nova Constellation.*"

This is the item reported by Sylvester S. Crosby on page 312 of his "The Early Coins of America".

These journal entries and letters indicate a long established interest in numismatics by Samuel Curwen covering almost the entire span of time that Curwen was in England as a self-imposed exile. It is reasonable to conclude that Curwen's interest in numismatics — and in particular in the "medal struck in Philadelphia" — was a great deal more than casual.



That "V York" Counterstamp -- now N York

(TN-82A)

● comment by ye Editor

In CNL Na. 55, page 697 we illustrated a Connecticut Obverse 16.3 of 1788 exhibiting a "V York" counterstamp and mentioned a Vermont Copper of 1788 also bearing the same caunterstamp. This latter coin was auctioned by Bowers & Ruddy Galleries as Lot 567 in the Garrett 1 Sale on November 28, 1979. CNL Patron Edward R. Barnsley suggests that this caunterstamp is NOT V York but N York, the V appearance resulting from a rather poorly struck italic N.

A third specimen has now appeared, this time on the abverse of a Connecticut 16.1-D of 1788 in the Garrett collection. This specimen is scheduled as Lot 1380 in the Garrett 3 Sale later this year.

Each of the three presently known specimens bearing the N York counterstamp is illustrated below enlarged approximately 1.5 X.



Ryder 21 Obverse (1788)
Lot 567 Garrett 1 Sale
Bowers & Ruddy



Miller 16.3 of 1788
Hauser Specimen



Miller 16.1 of 1788
Lot 1380 Garrett 3 Sale
Bowers & Ruddy

These impressians appear ta have been made by a puncheon af the sart used by American pewterers af the late 18th and early 19th century. A very similiar mark was used by Baardman & Hart in 1828-1850, but it reads N-YORK. Often twa separate tauch marks were used, one far the firm name and the ather ta indicate the city. Daes anyone else have any ideas? It would be interesting if we could identify the arigin af this caunterstamp.

Early American FISCAL PAPER

(TN-92)

● comment by ye Editor

CNL Potron Arvid O. Johnson of Oak Park, Illinois recently sent us a group of photostats of early American fiscal paper. These notes are physically very large when contrasted with the more usual paper currencies with which we are all familiar. Most measure from 8 to 11 inches in length and 6 to 10 inches in width -- altogether a very unhandy size when it comes to ease of handling & storage, but great for display purposes. Their size also prohibits full size reproduction in CNL; accordingly, each of the notes reproduced on the following pages has been substantially reduced in size and the percentage reduction necessary to make the illustration fit well on the page is recorded at the bottom of each page.

In our July 1977 issue (CNL No. 49, p. 593) we printed a request for assistance from Potron William Anderson of Commack, New York who is presently working on a book about the financing of the American Revolution. Mr. Anderson has reviewed the notes illustrated herein and has added a brief comment and estimate of rarity for each one. Our sincere thanks to William Anderson, and also to Richard Picker, for their assistance in identifying these items. If others of our Potrons have such certificates we will appreciate their sending copies -- either photostats or high quality "xerox" type reproductions -- for transmission to Mr. Anderson as continuing assistance in the preparation of his book.

We hope our readers will find this material of interest. Most CNL Potrons have their interests well rooted in the early American coinages -- there are few "Rag-pickers" -- but there are other strange things out there as well as those little metal disks and we hope these several pages will serve to stimulate a new interest.

Six of the notes on the following pages are from Massachusetts, one is a Continental Pay-Table Warrant and the last is a United States Loan-Office Bond dated 15 June 1792 in the amount of \$18,472.81 both sides of which are illustrated.



June 1782



State of the Massachusetts Bay

N. 555

Nov. 8, 1777

Borrowed and received of *George Corlis*
the Sum of *One hundred & Ninety Four Pounds*

Lawful Money, for the Use and Service of the STATE of **Massachusetts Bay**; and in behalf of said State I do hereby promise and oblige myself and Successors in the Office of Treasurer or Receiver-General, to repay the Possessor by the First Day of **June** 1780, the aforesaid Sum of *One hundred & Ninety Four Pounds* Lawful Money, in Spanish mill'd Dollars at **Six Shillings** each, or in the several Species of coined Silver and Gold enumerated in an Act made and passed in the Twenty third Year of his late Majesty King **George** the Second, entitled an Act for ascertaining the Rates at which coined Silver and Gold, English Half Pence and Farthings may pass within this Government, and according to the Rates therein mentioned, with Interest to be paid annually at **Six per Cent.**

Witness my Hand,

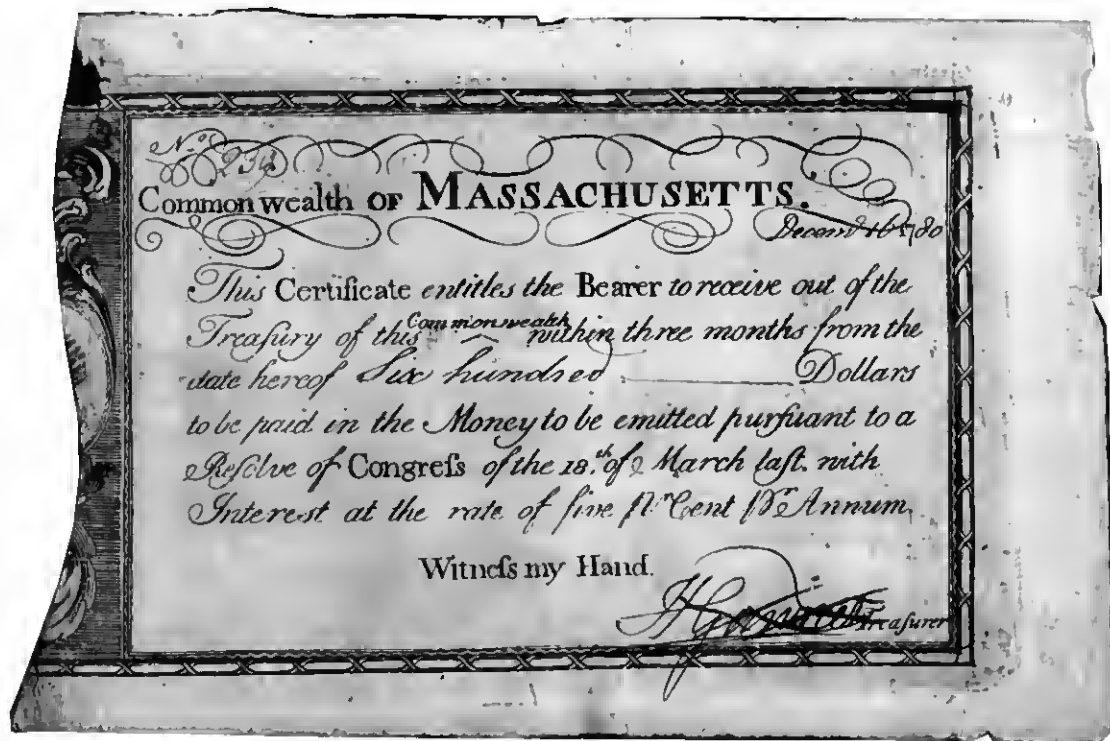
D. Laffin
Davis
J. Sumner
Committee.

H. Gordon Treasurer.

● MASSACHUSETTS LOAN CERTIFICATE ●

Engraved by Nathaniel Hurd
Approx. 300 printed
Serial Numbers 501-800
Low R-7

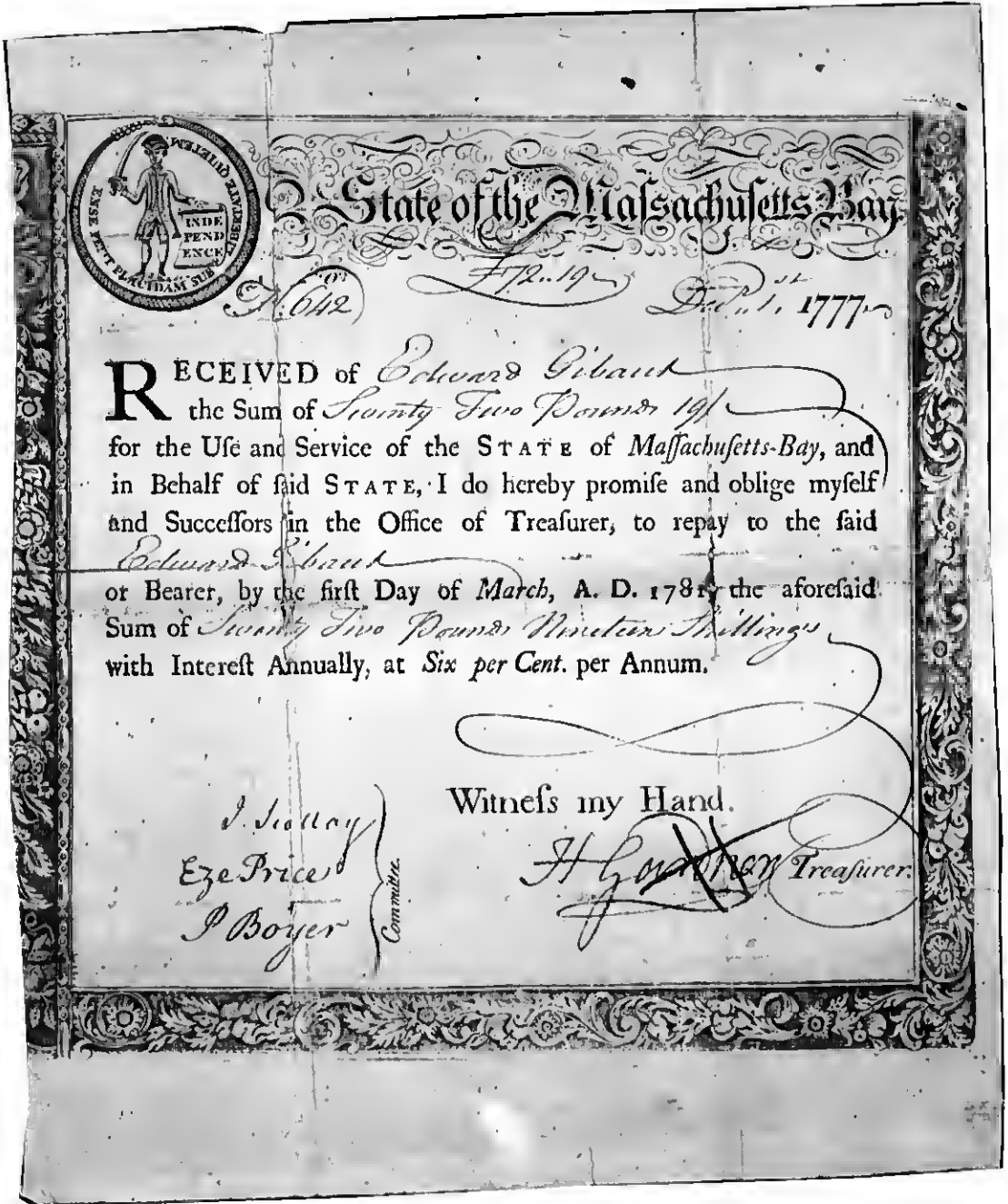
70% of full size (Height = 9 1/8"; Width = 8 1/4")



● MASSACHUSETTS GUARANTEED NOTE ●

Engraver uncertain
Probably less than 1000 printed
Law R-6

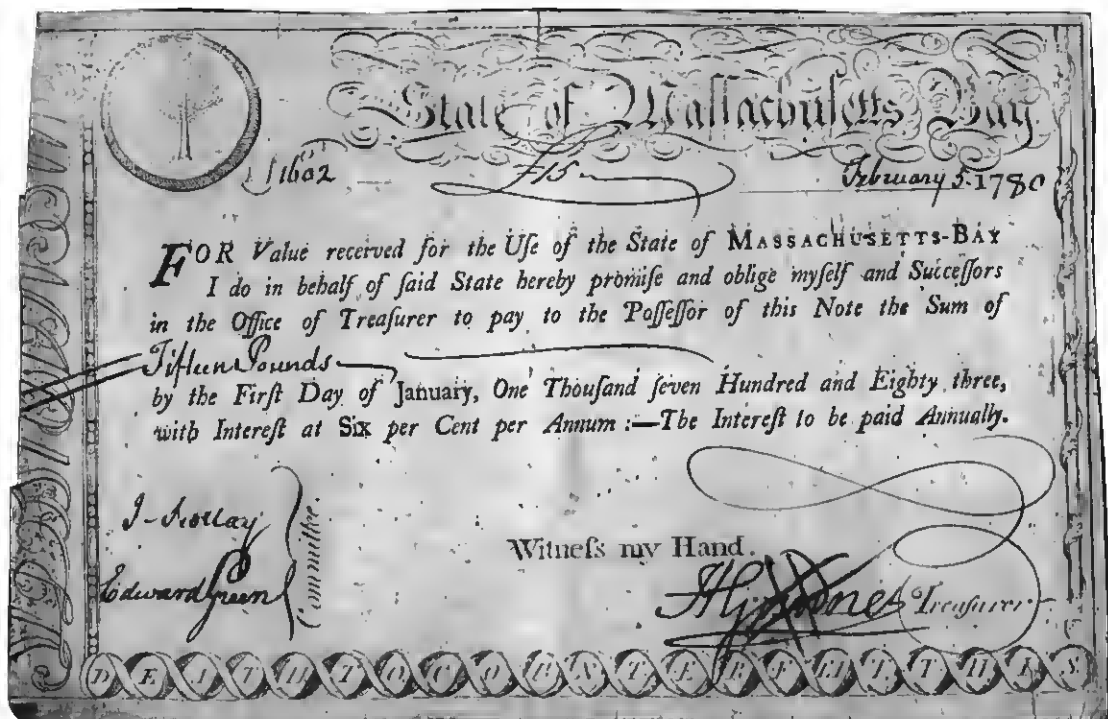
75% of full size (Height = 5 1/8"; Width = 8")



● MASSACHUSETTS CURRENCY REDEMPTION NOTE ●

Engraved by Hurd
Used to redeem old currency
At least 6200 issued
R-4

75% of full size (Height = 8 1/4"; Width = 7 1/2")



● MASSACHUSETTS LOTTERY NOTE 1st Class ●

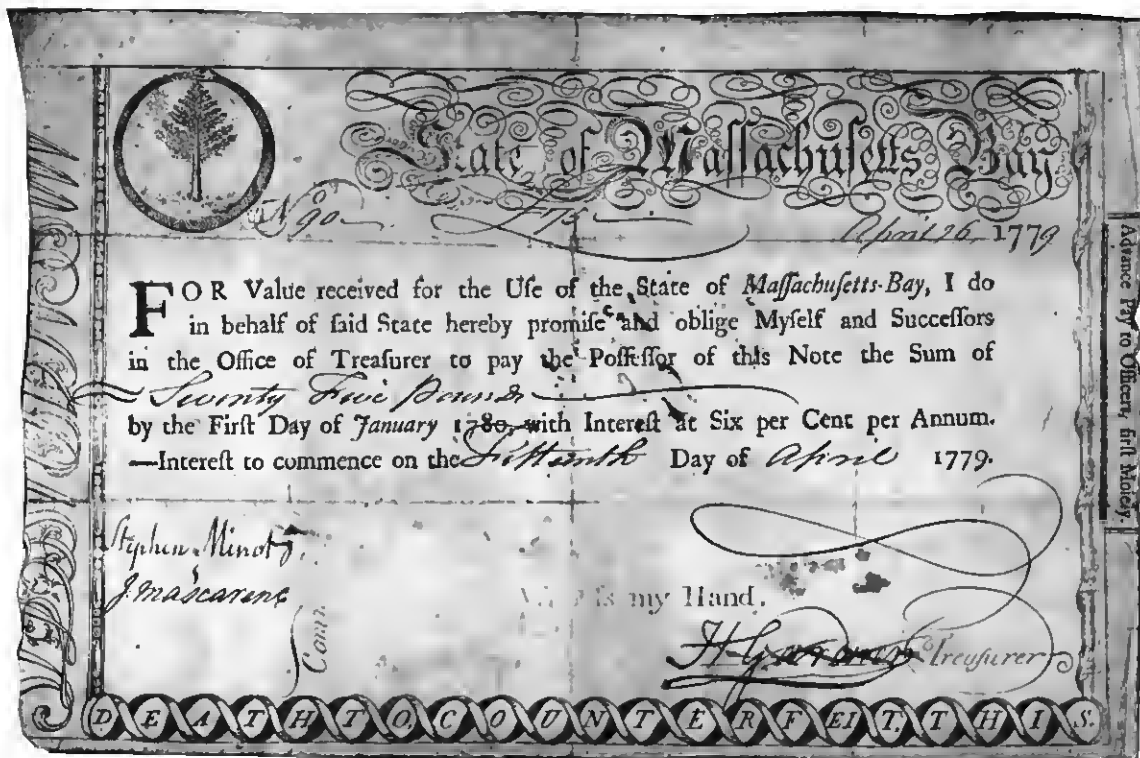
Right edge has been trimmed off that would say
Massachusetts State Lottery, Class the First.

Used to pay winners of State Lottery.

High R-6

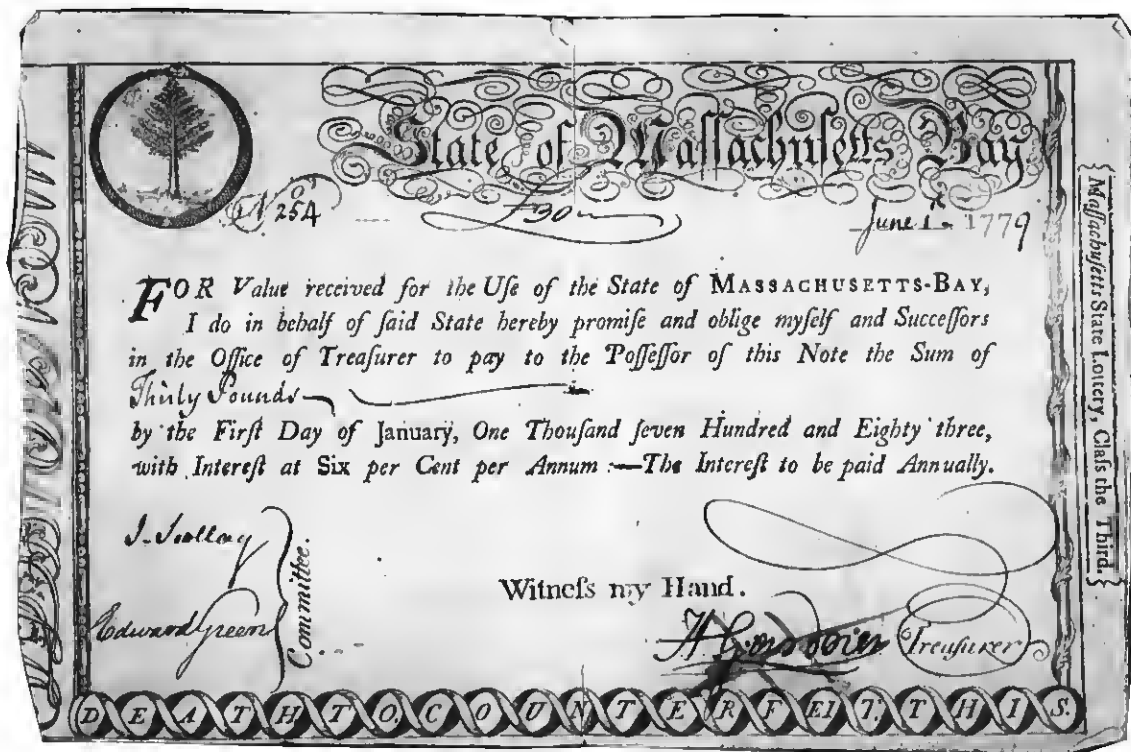
This note may have been trimmed and used for
same other purpose. There is no way to know.

65% of full size (Height = 5 3/4"; Width = 8 3/4")



● MASSACHUSETTS BOUNTY NOTE -- FIRST MONIETY ●

Probably engraved by Hurd
 Used for the first half years
 officers pay on 0 years bounty
 Approximately 500 issued
 R-5



● MASSACHUSETTS LOTTERY NOTE 3rd Class ●

R-5

65% of full size (Height = 5 7/8"; Width = 8 7/8")

Pay-Table Office, *Quart. 23.*

1784

S I R,

PLEASE to secure to, *M^r. John Blakemore*
the Payment of *Eighteen Pounds and fifteen Shillings*

being the Balance found due to him
for Service in the Continental Army, *in the year* 1781
Agreeable to Act of Assembly---and Charge the State.

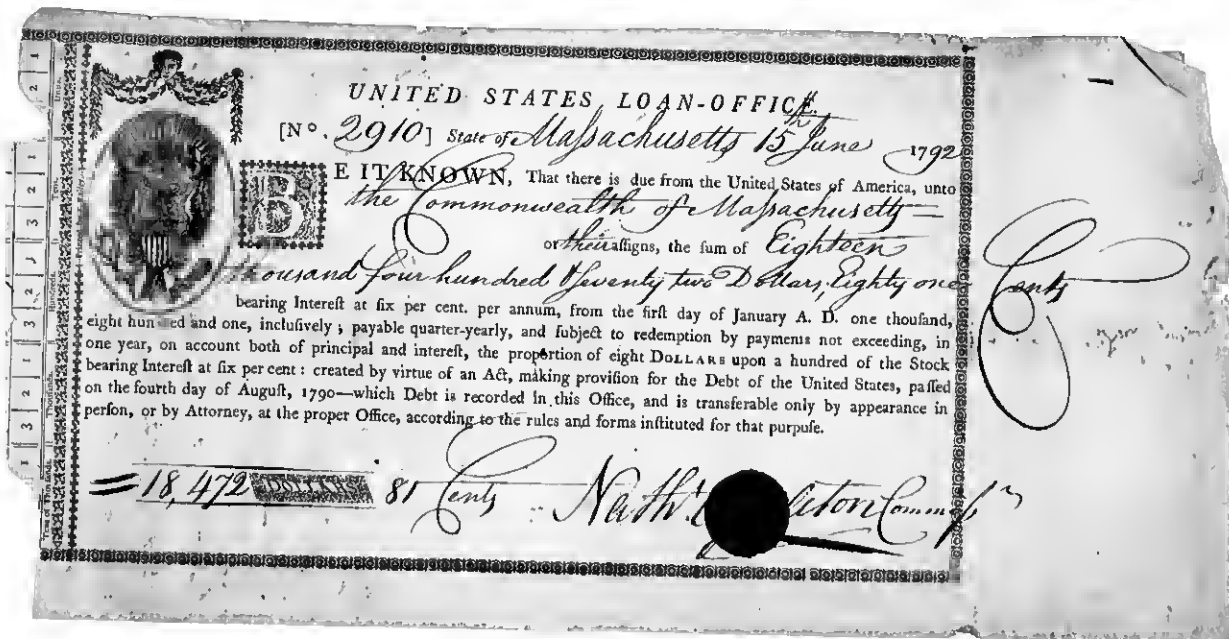
*£. 18. 15**9:7:6**Eleazer Wadsworth*

Committee

JOHN LAWRENCE, Esq. Treasurer.

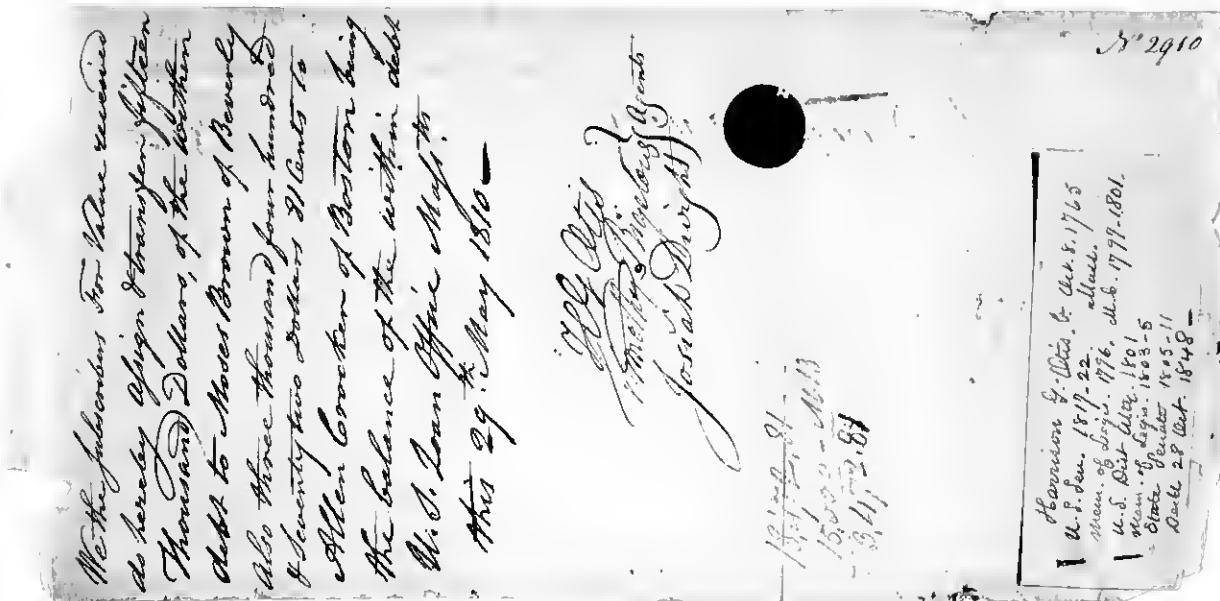
● CONTINENTAL PAY-TABLE WARRANT ●

75% of full size (Height = 6 3/8"; Width = 8 1/8")



● UNITED STATES LOAN-OFFICE BOND ●

Issued under the Act of August 4, 1790 which provided for the
debt of the United States.



On Donn Pearlman's SURVEY of THREE CONNECTICUT COPPERS**(TN-90A)**

● from Donald G. Portrick; Central Islip, New York

I don't always respond to numismatic census taking because, quite often, the takers who purportedly research for fellow numismatists keep the facts to themselves and use the information for their own gainful purpose. Many of our so-called researchers, and some famous names I might add, are "so very busy" I cannot seem to get time to publish the facts in the proper manner they should be done". Sometimes these researchers delay for years, using the knowledge they have gained for their own personal benefit in acquiring additional or more highly graded specimens. In this instance I applaud Donn Pearlman's revelation of facts in his Connecticut research. I apparently missed his original call for information and so I now help fill in.

Regarding the 1787 over 1877 Miller 12-Q Connecticut -- please be advised I was the purchaser of Lot No. 96, Early American Coppers Sale of February 15, 1975. My envelope notes the price realized was \$375.00.

In the interest of finding out whether this was, in fact, the probable or actual finest known specimen of this variety, I went to the bank and visited the piece. Going by strict Sheldon grading criteria, I call the piece XF 45, exactly as it was represented at the sale. In the real world of commercialism, this can possibly be called UNC, Super Gem UNC and any of those other dollar adjectives invented by our sometimes over-zealous dealers.

The piece is well centered obverse and reverse; color, a lovely ton; no spots or stains. The obverse and reverse fields are loaded with mint luster. The shoulder of the mole bust is fully struck up and luster covers every detail. The hair of the bust and the high points of the seated figure on the reverse are not fully struck up. Also those particular not too well struck high points show that brassy color rubbing evidence, perhaps caused by cabinet friction. There are no nicks or scratches that might give clues of circulation.

It is easy to contemplate that this might have been the Almost Uncirculated specimen referred to in descriptive matter of Donn's compilation about a possible other coin extant. Very probably it is the same coin.

But, for my purposes, I am satisfied with "Extremely Fine 45, Possibly Finest Known" for this piece. That it might be called AU or better by others is just fine, but XF 45 is the grade it will keep while it reposes with me. What my heirs or future appraisers or auctioneers may decide, I hope will not be decided for many years to come.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The "XF-45 Finest Known" mentioned by Donn Pearlman (CNL No. 57, p.709) appeared as Lot 1644 in the Sept. 1978

GENA Sale conducted by Kagin's of Des Moines, Iowa and is NOT the same specimen as Lot 96 of the Feb. 1975 EAC Sale conducted by Pine Tree Auction Co. of Albertson, New York. Both pieces are plated in their respective catalogs.

Another specimen of 12-Q of 1787 called Extremely Fine is identified in the inventory of the Garrett Collection listed in Q. David Bowers' "The History of United States Coinage As Illustrated by the Garrett Collection". This specimen will appear in the Garrett 3 Sale as Lot 1356.

JCS

THE METAL CALLED "TUTANAIGNE"

(TN-93)

- from Walter Breen; Berkeley, California

This word as a synonym for zinc is found in Crosby's account of the *Rasa Americana*. As Crosby spelled it, it is evidently an error for "tutenaga" or "tutenaigue" (the script u and script n often being mistaken for each other in those days). In HOBSON-JOBSON, the dictionary of Anglo-Indian terms (1903 edition), is an entry for "tutenaga" giving several alternative spellings, and claiming for this term a Portuguese Indian origin; the meaning is any white metal but most often zinc.

- Editor's Note:

Crosby's initial reference to Tutanaigne appears on page 150 of his "Early Coins of America" as follows:

In returning to our subject, that which first claims our attention is the patent granted to William Wood, Esq., for coining "Tokens * * * to go for half pence pence and Two pences," of such an alloy "that a mass or piece of fine metal made of such mixture or Composition and weighing Twenty ounces Averdupois doth contain one penny weight Troy of fine virgin Silver fifteen Ounces Averdupois of fine Brass, and the Remainder of the said piece of Twenty ounces Averdupois is made of the said double refined linck, otherwise called Tutanaigne or Spelter".

And -- in 1903 Dr. Philip Nelsan in "The Coinage of William Wood 1722-1733" states that "The material for the coinage of these American pieces was a mixture called Bath metal..." and relates the identical composition as did Crosby.

JCS

